GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
RAILWAYS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:637
ANSWERED ON:16.08.2007
RAILWAYS` COMPETITION WITH LOW COST AIRLINES
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Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways are facing stiff competition from low cost airlines;

(b) if so, the measures taken by the Railways to face the competition;

(c) the number of soft cards issued so far by the Railways and the facilities extended to the card holders;

(d) whether the Railways have taken any steps to make the scheme for frequent travellers (SOFT) more attractive; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R.VELU)

(a) & (b): Railways are aware of the competition from the Airlines sector particularly due to low cost Airlines. Following steps have been taken by the Railways to gear up to the competition:

(i) Reduction of fares of 1st AC and 2nd AC classes.
(ii) By introducing additional trains.
(iii) Enhancing the load of well patronised trains to the maximum to meet the demand.
(iv) Attaching additional coaches in trains to clear waiting list.
(v) Introduction of Scheme of Frequent Travellers (SOFT).
(vi) Upgradation of Passengers without additional charges.

(c) to (e): 33,428 SOFT (Scheme for Frequent Traveller) cards have been issued upto 31.7.2007. A Frequent Traveller gets complimentary train trip after certain number of reward points are accumulated. The other facilities extended and the steps taken to make the scheme more attractive are as under: -

1. Online registration, renewal and redemption of points earned.
2. Waiver of 1.8% transaction charge on the credit card transactions done through this card.
3. Facilities to shop, dine out or travel on cards issued under this scheme and earn railway points.
4. Card also offers discount on purchase of fuel at designated petrol pumps and also saving of transaction fee.